A. THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

●381 Though the chemical industry of Rumania ranks lowest among the chief industries on the basis of production value, it is better and more comprehensively developed than in the other south-east European countries. Production is chiefly confined to heavy chemicals manufactured largely from indigenous raw materials. Most of the factories are situated in Valachia, Transylvania, and around Timişoara in the Banat.

1. Acids and Alkalis

385 317 Rumania produced annually 45,000 metric tons of sulphuric acid, which was sufficient to cover the pre-war requirements of the country, which were mostly for the refining of mineral oil. The manufacture was in the hands of some six firms, of which the chief producer was the Mărăşeşti S.A.R., with plants at Mărăşeşti, Valea Călugărească and Braşov. Three of the smaller plants producing sulphuric acid with a total annual capacity of 18,000 tons, representing 35 per cent. of the total, were acquired by Hungary. The necessary sulphur was obtained from Rumanian pyrites mines located at Baia Mare and Baia Sprie in N. Transylvania, acquired by Hungary in 1940. Since that date supplies have been derived from Fundul Moldovei, Zam, Sacaramb and Altan Tepe, though not in sufficient quantities to cover requirements. Shortage of sulphuric acid has been partly eased by imports from Italy.

The alkali production is normally sufficient to yield a surplus for export. Rock salt, of which there is an important domestic production, forms the basis of the alkali industry.

Salt Production

	metric tons
1939	374,000
1940	323,000
1941*	267,000

* Reduced 1941 production is due to loss of salt mines to Hungary at Ocna Sugatag, Ocna Dejului and elsewhere.

385 Soda ash is made solely by the Solvay Company at Ocna-Mureşului, where the annual capacity of the plant is estimated at 50,000 metric tons. Caustic soda is made by the Solvay Company and by S. A. Nitrogen at Dicio Sân Martin. Production of alkali in 1939 and 1942 (estimated) was :—

	1939	1942
Soda ash ..	38,000	40,000
Caustic soda ..	11,800	15,000

Requirements of hydrochloric acid were about 3,000 to 3,500 metric tons a year, and were completely met by home production. Production of sodium sulphate, a by-product in the manufacture of hydrochloric acid, amounted to 2,650 metric tons in 1939.

The most important sulphate made in Rumania before the war was that of copper, production of which averaged 5,700 metric tons between 1933 and 1936, increasing to 12,400 tons in 1937. The chief producers were the Mărăşeşti and the Phœnix chemical works (the latter in ceded territory).

[439] There is at present an acute shortage of copper sulphate, the loss of which as a fungicide is particularly felt. Germany is reported to have supplied small quantities in return for exports of copper scrap.